

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amherst Land Conservation Deal Falls Through

May 18, 2016

Amherst, NH

Despite the best efforts of the Piscataquog Land Conservancy (PLC) and the Town of Amherst, the purchase of 227 +/- acre property currently owned by the Hazen family in Amherst will not be going forward. In conjunction with the Town of Amherst, PLC and the sellers signed a 90-day purchase option on February 2, 2016 that took the land off the market while the Town of Amherst placed a funding article (#31) on the 2016 town warrant, and the voters had their say on whether to approve it. The people of Amherst voted by a wide margin to approve the article -- which would have appropriated \$450,000 toward the purchase -- on March 8th, 2016. Because this land purchase will not occur, there will be no impact on the Amherst tax rate. Under the option agreement, if this funding was approved by Amherst voters; PLC, the sellers and the Town of Amherst would proceed to complete a Purchase and Sale (P&S) agreement to be signed no later than May 3, 2016. It was understood by PLC, the Town and the sellers that the terms of the P&S would mirror those previously negotiated and agreed to by the sellers through their agent. PLC and the Town of Amherst worked diligently and in good faith to complete the P&S agreement by the May 3, 2016 deadline. However, the sellers declined to sign the P&S agreement and consider this matter closed.

PLC and the Town of Amherst were working on or had submitted a number of grant applications to raise the additional \$500,000 needed to complete this purchase. When it became clear that the land purchase was not going to go forward, all of the grant applications were withdrawn.

Amherst Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara said, "The Amherst Board of Selectmen are disappointed that this purchase will no longer be going forward. This was a unique opportunity to both preserve open space and further protect the ground water in Amherst. We would like to thank the Amherst Conservation Commission along with others for their successful effort to educate the voters prior to the March election. We would also like to thank the Piscataquog Land Conservancy for the significant amount of work done including obtaining appraisals, preparing option and P&S documents and grant writing, and, of course, our citizens, for their overwhelming support of this initiative. While this effort didn't obtain the desired result, it wasn't for a lack of effort on the part of many who worked to try and make this happen."

Chris Wells, President and Executive Director of the Piscataquog Land Conservancy stated, "For our part, Piscataquog Land Conservancy is deeply disappointed that the Hazen purchase has come to this point. Throughout this process, PLC and the Town of Amherst both worked in good faith with each other and with the sellers, and did everything we possibly could to make the conservation purchase happen. "